

Message

From: John MacFarlane [CN=John MacFarlane/OU=R6/O=USEPA/C=US]
Sent: 4/9/2012 6:46:56 PM
To: Rhonda Smith [Smith.Rhonda@epamail.epa.gov]; Debra Griffin [Griffin.Debra@epamail.epa.gov]; Michael Jansky [Jansky.Michael@epamail.epa.gov]
Subject: Fw: John Casey (TXDOT) fired

Thank you,
John MacFarlane
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----- Forwarded by John MacFarlane/R6/USEPA/US on 04/09/2012 01:46 PM -----

From: Israel Anderson/R6/USEPA/US
To: John MacFarlane/R6/USEPA/US@EPA, Shirley Quinones/R6/USEPA/US@EPA, Diane Taheri/R6/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 04/09/2012 01:43 PM
Subject: Fw: John Casey (TXDOT) fired

FYI

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Date: 04/06/2012 07:20 PM
Subject: John Casey (TXDOT) fired

This news is important to share with this group since the Harbor Bridge project is one of the issues our workgroup is charged with working on.



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TxDOT administrator's firing shouldn't harm Corpus Christi projects, leaders say

John Casey had been district engineer since July 1, 2010

By Mark Collette

Originally published 12:00 p.m., April 5, 2012

Updated 05:22 p.m., April 5, 2012

CORPUS CHRISTI — Local leaders said this week's firing of the Texas Department of Transportation district engineer was unexpected but should not compromise major projects such as the Harbor Bridge replacement.

John Casey had been Corpus Christi district engineer since July 1, 2010. The agency offered few details about his departure. A spokesman said the department sought a different direction for the district's leadership.

State Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, D-McAllen, who worked with state and local leaders last legislative session to secure a commitment from the department for hundreds of millions in funding for the bridge project, said executive director Phil Wilson notified him Wednesday of Casey's removal.

He said Wilson assured him the bridge project is in no way jeopardized by the firing.

"There will be no change at all in the current transportation department's priorities for the Coastal Bend, particularly the bridge project," Hinojosa said.

Hinojosa on Thursday started planning a meeting next month with department leaders and community stakeholders to ensure the decade-long project — in the early planning stages with a price tag estimated as high as \$800 million — maintains momentum.

"I like John and thought he was doing a good job," he said.

Casey could not be reached for comment.

His hiring was an unusual move for an agency with a history of hiring administrators from within its ranks. Casey previously worked with a large private-sector transportation firm.

Tom Niskala, director of the Metropolitan Planning Organization, called the firing disappointing.

"John worked very, very well with the other agencies and was really becoming a force in local transportation," he said.

Niskala said Casey's departure comes as the department and local agencies have reached new levels of cooperation.

"It's a little bit hard to tell" what impact the firing could have, Niskala said. "Of course, John Casey was a significant element in the Harbor Bridge discussions, but (his) staff is still here to kind of carry that forward."

Interim Corpus Christi City Engineer Dan Biles agreed, saying he expects the city to continue having a good relationship with the transportation department no matter who is in charge of the district.

Mayor Joe Adame said Wilson assured him the bridge and development of Interstate 69 remain priorities for the department. Adame said he told Wilson the community is disappointed about the firing.

"There's such a competition for funding," Adame said. "I think for once, many of us felt like we were finally represented in this part of the state."

Nueces County Judge Loyd Neal said at his recent State of the County address that the bridge project is at a critical juncture when cooperation between cities, counties and state agencies is paramount. The goal, he said, is to obtain \$400 million to \$600 million from the state and to combine it with local and federal money to reach the \$800 million target.

The transportation department named Lonnie Gregorcyk, district engineer for the Yoakum district, as the interim head of the Corpus Christi district. The district, one of 25 statewide, is composed of Aransas, Bee, Goliad, Jim Wells, Karnes, Kleberg, Live Oak, Nueces, Refugio and San Patricio counties.

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